

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 EPG-02 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-01
INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04
USIA-06 OES-07 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07
PA-01 PRS-01 IGA-02 OPR-02 /106 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4462

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENGR, ET

SUBJECT: PETROLEUM RATIONING TIGHTENED IN ETHIOPIA

REF. ADDIS ABABA 3526

1. SUMMARY: EPMG HAS SIGNIFICANTLY TIGHTENED PETROLEUM RATIONING DURING PAST WEEK. WHILE ARRIVALS OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS IN ADDIS ABABA FROM ASSAB REFINERY ARE RUNNING AT NORMAL LEVELS, EPMG IS HOLDING FUEL OFF THE MARKET TO BUILD UP RESERVE STOCKS IN ADDIS ABABA TO MAXIMUM LEVELS. CURRENT RATIONING IS NOT RPT NOT CONNECTED TO CUT-OFF OF DJIBOUTI-ADDIS ABABA RAILWAY. DRIVERS ARE BEING INCONVENIENCED BUT NEW SCHEME IS BEING REASONABLY WELL IMPLEMENTED. ACTION IS PRUDENT MOVE BY EPMG TO MAXIMIZE INLAND PETROLEUM RESERVES IN VIEW OF VULNERABILITY OF ADDIS ABABA-ASSAB ROAD AND ADDIS ABABA-DJIBOUTI RAILWAY. END SUMMARY.

2. EPMG HAS SIGNIFICANTLY TIGHTENED ADDIS ABABA PETROLEUM RATION SYSTEM DURING PAST WEEK. MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM (MCT) INSTRUCTED FOUR PETROLEUM DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES ON JUNE 6 TO SIGNIFICANTLY CUT DELIVERIES FOR TWO
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WEEK PERIOD (JUNE 5-18) TO GAS STATIONS SERVING ALL CUSTOMER GROUPS EXCEPT TRUCKS AND BUSES. IN ADDITION, INDIVIDUAL QUOTAS FOR PRIVATE VEHICLES WERE CUT AND 25 LITER PER DAY LIMIT ESTABLISHED FOR DIPLOMATIC AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION VEHICLES. PETROLEUM PRODUCT DELIVERIES FROM ADDIS TO OUTGOING REGIONS HAVE BEEN SHARPLY REDUCED EXCEPT TO DIRE DAWA-HARAR REGION WHICH NOW HAS TO BE SUPPLIED BY TANK TRUCKS RATHER

THAN RAILROAD. MCT PLACED A MAN AT MOBIL (AND PRESUMABLY OTHER OIL COMPANIES) TO ASSURE THAT EPMG ALLOCATION INSTRUCTIONS ARE FOLLOWED.

3. REDUCED AVAILABILITIES OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS HAS LED TO LONG LINES OF VEHICLES AT GAS STATIONS. MANY STATIONS QUICKLY RAN OUT OF GAS AND ARE ONLY BEING RESUPPLIED EVERY OTHER DAY. INCONVENIENCE TO ALL DRIVERS IN ADDIS (INCLUDING EMBASSY PERSONNEL) HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE AND COMPLAINTS VOICED TO EPMG FROM THIS AND OTHER EMBASSIES HAVE RESULTED IN INCREASE OF DELIVERIES TO DIPLOMATIC STATIONS TO NEARLY TWICE ORIGINAL AMOUNT. EPMG ANNOUNCED JUNE 13 THAT TWO STATIONS WOULD SERVE ONLY DIPLOMATIC AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION VEHICLES WHICH SHOULD FURTHER IMPROVE SITUATION FOR THESE CUSTOMERS. EPMG HAS ALSO RELAXED RATION SYSTEM FOR TAXIS EFFECTIVE JUNE 14, A TACIT RECOGNITION OF POLITICAL IMPORTANCE EPMG ATTACHES TO MAINTAINING ADEQUATE TAXI SERVICE. LONG LINES REMAIN AT STATIONS SERVING PRIVATE AND ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT VEHICLES.

4. ORIGINAL MCT INSTRUCTIONS TO OIL INDUSTRY CONTAINED NO ALLOCATION FOR US EMBASSY (USED FOR OFFICIAL VEHICLES) OR OTHER EMBASSIES WITH THEIR OWN GAS STORAGE TANKS. EMBASSY RECEIVED A ONE-TIME DELIVERY FROM MOBIL ON JUNE 11 SO WE HAVE ADEQUATE SUPPLY FOR OFFICIAL VEHICLES AT THE MOMENT. NEVERTHELESS, EMBASSY HAS TAKEN STEPS TO CONSERVE OUR STOCKS AND IS SEEKING CLARIFICATION THROUGH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF PEMG POLICY ON DELIVERIES TO EMBASSY.

5. CURRENT RETAIL SHORTAGE OF PETROLEUM IS NOT RPT NOT CON-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NECTED TO DISRUPTION IN DJIBOUTI-ADDIS ABABA RAILWAY. SUPPLIES FROM ASSAB REFINERY ARE ARRIVING IN ADDIS ABABA AT NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL RATE. SHORTAGES AT PUMP DUE ONLY TO DIVERSION TO STORAGE OF CONSIDERABLE PORTION OF PRODUCT ARRIVING IN ADDIS ABABA. PETROLEUM INDUSTRY SOURCE ESTIMATES THAT IF CURRENT RATION SYSTEM REMAINS IN EFFECT, ADDIS ABABA STOCKS WILL REACH MAXIMUM CAPACITY OF 4,000,000 LITERS (9 OR 10 DAY SUPPLY) BY THE END OF JUNE. EPMG HAS GIVEN NO EXPLANATION TO OIL INDUSTRY WHY STOCKS ARE TO BE "TOPPED OFF". MCT HAS ASKED PETROLEUM COMPANIES TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE REVITALIZATION OF LARGE FORMER ITALIAN MILITARY STORAGE FACILITY AT KOMBOLCHA (NEAR DESSIE) AND IS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO INCREASE ITS TANK TRUCK FLEET. SINGLE LOCAL FIRM ABLE TO FABRICATE TANKS TO MOUNT ON TRUCK CHASSIS, HOWEVER, CAN PRODUCE TANKS FOR ONLY ONE TANK TRUCK AND TRAILER PER WEEK. EPMG HAS ORDERED 100 TEN-TON TRUCKS FROM LOCAL FIAT ASSEMBLY PLANT, OF WHICH THIRTY ARE TO BE CONVERTED TO TANK TRUCKS. THIS PLANT'S CAPACITY VIRBPE (#) TRUCKS (WITHOUT TRAILERS) PER WEEK.

6. IMPORTED JET FUEL (JET A) AND AVIATION GAS SITUATION
IN ADDIS REMAINS AS REPORTED REFTEL. ALLOCATIONS OF JET A
FOR INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES HAVE BEEN CUT BY 50 PER CENT
WHICH SHOULD STRETCH CURRENT SUPPLY UNTIL AT LEAST JULY 8.
MOBIL PLANNING TO IMPORT JET A THROUGH ASSAB AND HAS BEEN
PROMISED TANK TRUCKS FOR THAT PURPOSE BY MCT.

7. COMMENT: WHILE TIGHTENING OF RATIONING SYSTEM IMPOSES
CONSIDERABLE INCONVENIENCE ON ALL CONSUMERS, IT IS LOGICAL
MOVE BY EPMG. APART FROM MILITARY REQUIREMENTS, IT CLEARLY
IN EPMG INTEREST TO MAXIMIZE INLAND RESERVES OF PETROLEUM
PRODUCTS IN VIEW OF VULNERABILITY OF ASSAB ROAD AND DJIBOUTI
RAILWAY. DESPITE EXTENSIVE GRUMBLING BY VEHICLE OWNERS, IT
UNLIKELY THAT CURRENT PETROLEUM SITUATION WILL HAVE
SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS.

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NOE BY OC/T: (#) PARA. 5. OMISSION. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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Message Attributes

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